Cereal Banks in villages

†*409. SHRI P.K. MAHESHWARI: Will the Minister of TRIBAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to set-up Cereal Banks in the villages;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) in what manner it will help to provide food security to the villagers, particularly poor villagers?

THE MINISTER OF TRIBAL AFFAIRS (SHRI JUAL ORAM): (a) to (c) A Central Sector Scheme of Grain Banks in tribal villages was launched during 1996-97. The Scheme was started on a pilot basis in selected areas out of the areas identified by CPC for preventive measures against deaths of children in remote and backward tribal areas by providing a safeguard against fall in nutritional standard to Scheduled Tribes living in remote rural areas. Under this scheme the Ministry of Tribal Affairs provides a one time grant towards purchase of food grains of locally preferred variety
for the initial stock of the bank, setting up of storage facilities of traditional type and purchase of weight and scales. Member families can take loans of food grains in instalment during the period of scarcity and can repay it, in cash or kind, with noin nnl i terest at the time of the next successful harvest. The Grain Banks are to be managed by Working Committees elected by beneficiaries themselves. All tribal families in the concerned village as well as interested Scheduled Caste families living below the poverty line can be members of a particular Grain Bank under the Scheme. The Scheme was initially started in 13 States *viz.* Andhra Pradesh, West Bengal, Bihar, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa, Tripura, Rajasthan. Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh and Manipur.

Funds are released by the Ministry to the State Governments through TRIFED which is the channelising agency under the scheme.

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

So far an amount of Rs. 1024.38 lakhs has been released to 11 States for establishment of 1876 Grain Banks to benefit 1888S1 families.

As per the scheme the member families of the Grain Bank are entitled to take loans of food grains in four instalments upto 25 kg each during the rainy season or in any other period of scarcity. The loan is required to be returned with interest in cash or kind at the time of the next harvest season. Thus the present scheme provide for food security to the poor tribal villagers, within the village itself.

Comprehensive Policy for mentally challenged persons

*410. SHRI H.K. JAVARE GOWDA: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that mentally challenged persons are increasing in the country;

(b) if so, the details of such persons, State-wise;

(c) whether Government propose to make a comprehensive mental health policy in order to take care of these persons; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (DR. C.P. THAKUR): (a) to (d) The number of mentally challenged persons (which includes those suffering from mental illness and those with mental retardation) is increasing due to changes in demographics such as increase in population and over all increase in the rate of depression world-wide.

The State-wise data on persons suffering from mental disorders is not available. Epidemiological studies have revealed that 1 to 2% of the population has major mental disorders and S to 10% suffer from minor mental disorders.

The Government had launched the National Mental Health Programme in 1982 and has initiated a pilot programme called the District Mental Health Programme in 1996-97 for providing care for persons with mental disorders in selected districts in the country. The District Mental Health Programme is presently being implemented in